

Advent Devotional December 23, 2024

Weekly theme: Love

Scripture

Luke 1:57-66

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." 62 Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. 63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. 66 All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Devotion

The Rev. Andrew Tennant '12

The birth story of John the Baptist typically plays second fiddle to the story of the birth of Christ, but the story of and prophecy of John the Baptist is a vital part of the story of God's love made into flesh through his one and only son, Jesus the Christ. When the women present at the birth of John questioned his name and witnessed Zechariah's voice return, they were amazed and wondered what God had in store for this child.

For years, Zechariah and Elizabeth were unable to have children of their own, but their love for one another never wavered. Their love for God, and their prayers for a child, never wavered. Though when the angel appeared to Zechariah to give him the news of the coming birth of his son, he was filled with some doubt, his love and faith never wavered, and his belief in what to call his son and in his son's role never faded. John the Baptist would become a Prophet of the Most High, and he would prepare the way of the Lord. John's life and ministry were birthed out of the love his parents had for each other, the love that God had for his parents, and the path that God had for him.

Advent is a season of preparation for Christ's coming. John the Baptist spent his life preparing the people of Israel for the Messiah's coming. It was the love of God that set the meaning of the entire reason for Christmas in motion.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we enter the pinnacle of this season, we remember how your love set things in motion which would alter the course of human history through the birth of your mighty prophet John the Baptist and through the birth of your son, Jesus Christ, who would show the world the ultimate gift of his love through the sacrifice he willingly made for all of humanity. We pray all these things in the blessed name of Jesus Christ. Amen!